CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. 1. A commerce management method for managing agreements including one or
more contingencies, said method comprising the steps of:

    a)   logging at least one condition for an agreement and identifying at least one
potential response as indicating satisfaction of said at least one condition;

    b)   retrieving information related to responses to each condition;

    c)   checking said retrieved information to determine whether said agreement
is determinate; and

    d)   notifying contracting parties when said agreement is determined to be
determinate.

2. A commerce management method as in claim 1, wherein the logging step (a)
further includes logging at least one milestone corresponding to satisfaction of each said
condition.

3. A commerce management method as in claim 2, further comprising after the
logging step (a), the steps of:

    a1)   setting an alarm responsive to each milestone; and

    a2)   waiting for an occurrence of one said alarm prior to proceeding to the
retrieval step (b).

4. A commerce management method as in claim 3, wherein the retrieving step (b)
comprises automatically retrieving information from previously identified remotely
connected locations.

1   5.   A commerce management method as in claim 4, wherein the retrieving step (b)

2   further comprises the steps of:

3   i)   sending reminders to parties identified in said agreement; and

4   ii)   receiving input form said parties, said input being included in said

5   retrieved information.

1   6.   A commerce management method as in claim 3, wherein the waiting step (a)

2   comprises, responsive to the occurrence of one said alarm, the further step of:

3   a3) .   sending reminders to parties identified in said agreement.

1   7.   A commerce management method as in claim 3, wherein the checking step (c)

2   comprises:

3   i)   recording responses to satisfied conditions; and

4   ii)   logging passage of each said milestone corresponding to the alarm

5   occurrence.

1   8.   A commerce management method as in claim 7, further comprising after the step

2   (d) of notifying the parties, returning to the waiting step (a2) and, the waiting step (a2)

3   further comprises returning to the logging step (a) responsive to a request by a contracting

4   party to log conditions for a new agreement.

1   9.   A commerce management method as in claim 7, wherein the step (d) of notifying

2   the parties, notifies parties that the contract has failed when a response to a condition

3   indicates said condition cannot be satisfied.

1   10.   A commerce management method as in claim 7, wherein the step (d) of notifying

2   the parties, notifies parties that the contract is determinate when identified satisfying

3   responses have been received for each said condition.

1   11.   A commerce management method as in claim 7, wherein the step (d) of notifying

2   the parties, notifies parties a milestone has passed and a corresponding condition remains

3   unsatisfied.

1   12.   A commerce management system comprising:

2   a plurality of remotely connected terminals, contracting parties entering

3   information about contract conditions in said terminals;

4   a storage maintaining a contingency agreement database, said contingency

5   agreement database including contracting party information and condition information on

6   a plurality of agreements, said condition information comprising including:

7   one or more potential responses satisfying each condition, and

8   one or more milestone for each said potential response; and

9   an automatic data retriever retrieving condition response information from one or

10   more remotely connected computers.

1   13   A commerce management system as in claim 12, further comprising:

2   an automatic mailer selectively sending reminders to parties identified in said

3   database and notifying contracting parties when a corresponding agreement is

4   determinate.

1   14.   A commerce management system as in claim 13 further comprising:

2   a timer sending alarms to said automatic data retriever and said automatic mailer

3   responsive to said milestones, said automatic data retriever retrieving data and said

4   automatic mailer sending reminders responsive to alarms from said timer.

1   15.   A commerce management system as in claim 14 wherein said automatic mailer

2   sends electronic mail (e-mail) to parties identified by an e-mail address.

1   16.   A computer program product commerce management, said computer program

2   product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code

3   thereon, said computer readable program code comprising:

4   computer readable program code means for logging conditions for agreements and

5   for each logged condition identifying at least one potential response as indicating

6   satisfaction;

7   computer readable program code means for retrieving information related to

8   responses to each condition;

9   computer readable program code means for checking said retrieved information to

10   determine whether said agreement is determinate; and

11   computer readable program code means for notifying contracting parties when

12   said agreement is determinate.

1   17.   A computer program product as in claim 16 further comprising:

2   computer readable program code means for maintaining a list of milestones, at

3   least one milestone corresponding to each of said logged conditions.

1   18.   A computer program product as in claim 17, wherein the computer readable

2   program code means for logging conditions also logs parties identified with said

3   conditions and said computer program product code for maintaining the milestone list

4   further includes milestones for initiating sending reminders to said identified parties.

1   19.   A computer program product as in claim 18, further comprising:

2   computer readable program code means for setting alarms corresponding to said

3   milestones, said reminders being sent and said contracting parties being notified

4   automatically in response to said alarms.

1   20.   A computer program product as in claim 19, further comprising:

2   computer readable program code means for recording passage of a milestone.